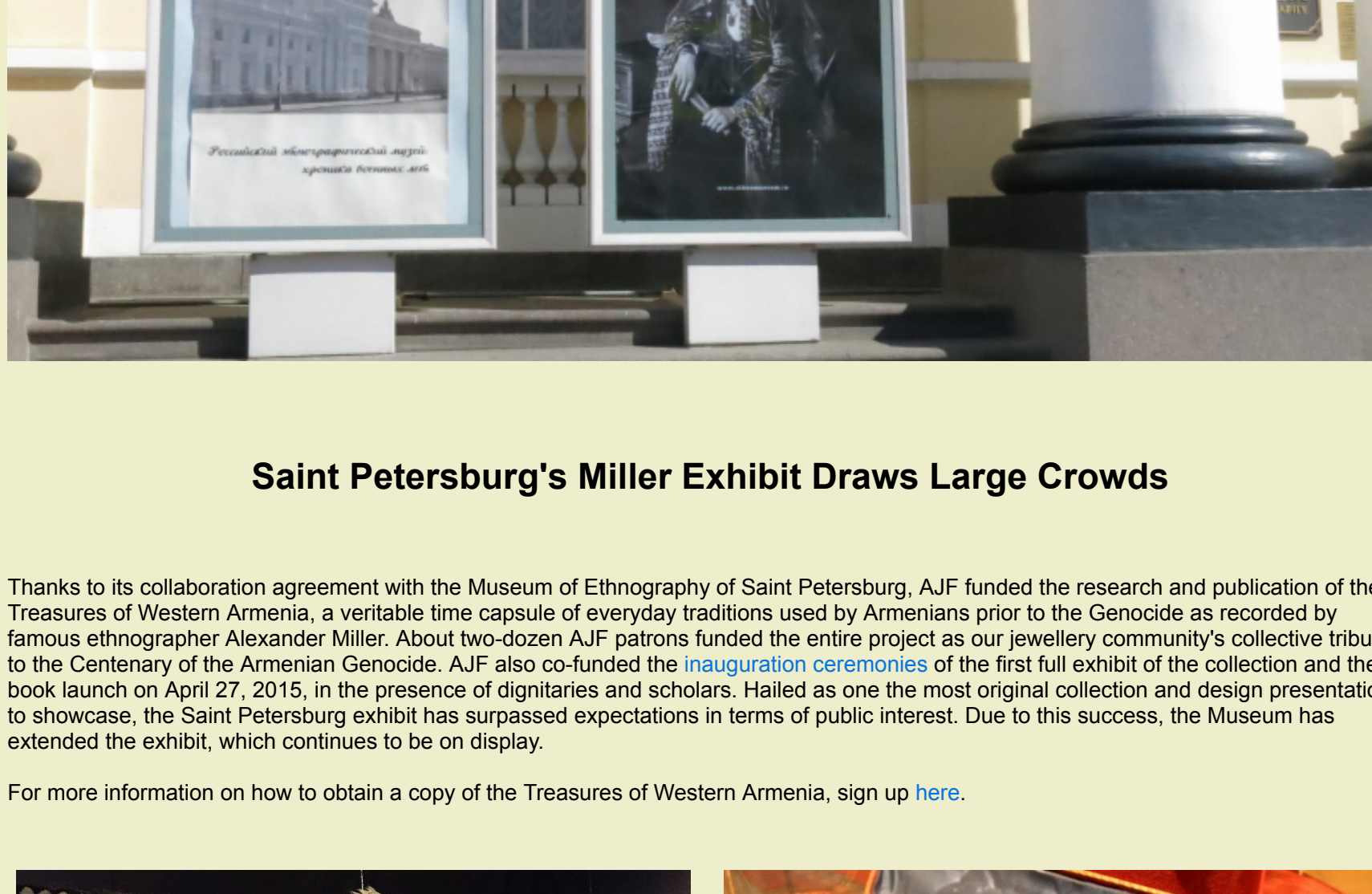


Armenian Jewellers Foundation

Geneva, Switzerland

Advancing the Heritage of Armenians in Jewellery

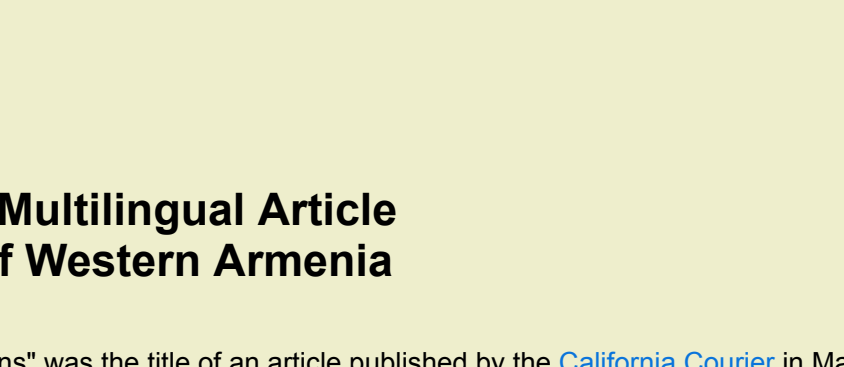
Geneva, July 2015



Saint Petersburg's Miller Exhibit Draws Large Crowds

Thanks to its collaboration agreement with the Museum of Ethnography of Saint Petersburg, AJF funded the research and publication of the Treasures of Western Armenia, a veritable time capsule of everyday traditions used by Armenians prior to the Genocide as recorded by famous ethnographer Alexander Miller. About two-dozen AJF patrons funded the entire project as our jewellery community's collective tribute to the centenary of the Armenian Genocide. AJF also co-funded the **inauguration ceremonies** of the first full exhibit of the collection and the book launch on April 27, 2015, in the presence of dignitaries and scholars. Hailed as one of the most original collection and design presentations to showcase, the Saint Petersburg exhibit has surpassed expectations in terms of public interest. Due to this success, the Museum has extended the exhibit, which continues to be on display.

For more information on how to obtain a copy of the Treasures of Western Armenia, sign up [here](#).



California Courier's Multilingual Article on The Treasures of Western Armenia

"Museum Exhibits Armenian Artifacts a Century after Rescue by Russians" was the title of an article published by the [California Courier](#) in May. The article has already been translated and published in several languages including Russian, Turkish, and French. Harut Sassounian's call to organize the exhibit in various countries has also sparked talks and interest in several communities. Once more, we present the article to the AJF public.

On my way back from the Centennial events in Yerevan last week, I stopped in Saint Petersburg, Russia, to attend the inauguration of an unprecedented exhibit of Armenian artifacts rescued by Russian ethnographers from Western Armenia during the Genocide.

Here is the incredible background story of that unique exhibit. In 1916, during the Russian military campaign which temporarily liberated Western Armenia from Ottoman Turkey, Saint Petersburg's Russian Museum of Ethnography sought Czar Nicholas II's permission to dispatch a scholarly expedition to the Van area to collect Armenian artifacts from imminent loss. The Czar gave immediate consent in his handwriting: "Approve. Need to hurry."

A small team of ethnographers led by Alexander Miller arrived in Van on June 10, 1916, after a lengthy and perilous journey. During their two-week stay, they managed to purchase from local inhabitants a total of 513 objects: 396 Armenian, 110 Assyrian, 5 Kurdish, and 2 Turkish. The artifacts included traditional Armenian costumes, jewelry, and carpets from the City of Van, the towns of Alur, Bitlis, Moks, Mush, Shatak, and neighboring villages. During their visit, the scholars took 60 photographs of natural landscapes, historical monuments, buildings, and some residents. All of these materials were hauled back to Saint Petersburg under the protection of the Russian military.

Surprisingly, these painstakingly-collected cultural objects remained in the Russian museum's basement for 100 years and were never displayed! No one seemed to remember their existence, until two years ago, when Armenia's Consul General Yardan Hakopyan in Saint Petersburg learned about these artifacts and informed the authorities in Armenia, local community leaders, and the Armenian Jewellery Association.

After extensive joint efforts between the Armenian Jewellers Foundation and the Russian Museum of Ethnography, the items that were kept in storage for a century were finally put on display in Saint Petersburg last week. The Jewellers Foundation and the Russian Museum published an impressive catalog titled, "Treasures of Western Armenia," which showcased the artifacts collected from the region of Van in 1916, before its recapture and genocidal destruction by Ottoman Turkish forces.

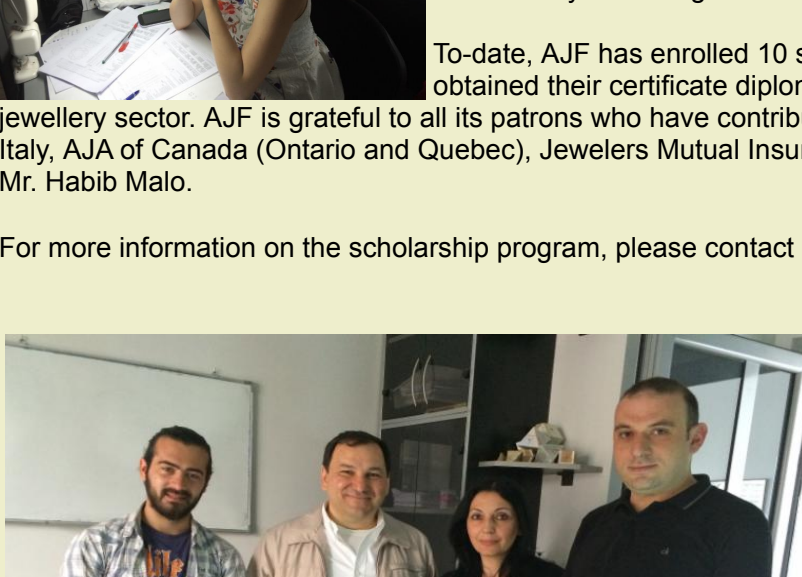
The exhibit was officially opened on April 27, 2015, at the Russian Museum of Ethnography. It was attended by Vigen Sargsyan, the Armenian President's Chief of Staff, Olga Kazanskaya, Vice Governor of Saint Petersburg, Vladimir Grusman, Director of Russian Museum of Ethnography, Pierre Akkelian, Chairman of Armenian Jewellers Foundation, Gagik Gevorgyan, President of Armenian Jewellery Association, and Karen Mkrtchyan, the Armenian community leader of Saint Petersburg.

Not surprisingly, after it became known that the Museum of Ethnography had in its possession valuable artifacts from the Van region, the Consulate of Turkey in Saint Petersburg contacted the Museum claiming that these items are the property of the Turkish Republic and sought their return. The Museum's leadership rejected the Turkish request as the objects were purchased from their owners in 1916.

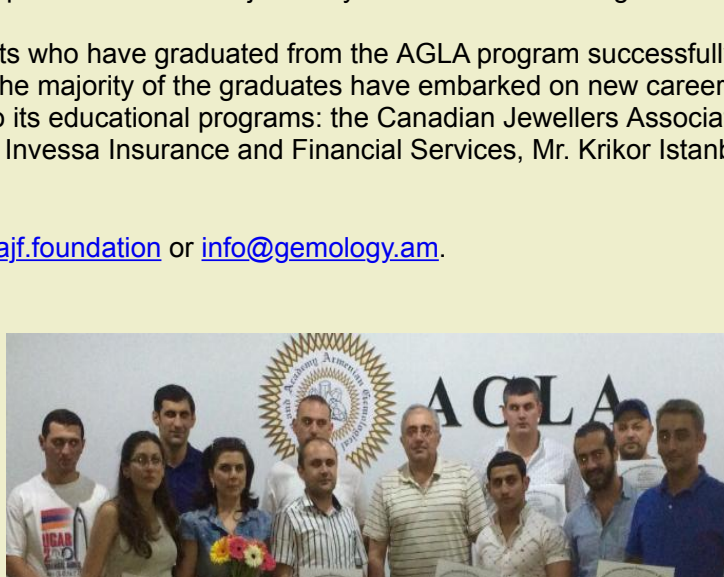
It is ironic that Turkish diplomats had the audacity to request these Armenian artifacts, after having killed their owners, burned their homes, and stolen their possessions! One would hope that the Turkish government would be foolish enough to go ahead and file a lawsuit against the Russian Museum, trying to claim these items. Such a lawsuit would further publicize Turkish responsibility for the Armenian Genocide, the looting of Armenian cultural objects, and occupation of their ancestral homeland!

One hundred years later, another expedition should be dispatched to Turkish museums and libraries to locate and recover all Armenian artifacts, manuscripts and other valuable items plundered during the Genocide. Lawsuits should be filed against all Turkish institutions holding such Armenian materials. If local Turkish courts reject the demand, Armenians should then appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in order to recover these long lost and precious fragments of Armenian cultural heritage. Such a legal effort would be yet another means of seeking restitution for the massive Genocide-era losses suffered by Armenians a century ago!

The Russian Museum's remarkable exhibit should go on tour to Armenian communities around the world: Athens, Beirut, Berlin, Boston, Buenos Aires, London, Los Angeles, Montreal, Moscow, New York, Paris, Tehran, Toronto, San Francisco, San Paulo, Sydney, Yerevan and many other cities. Let the world see a small sampling of the vast quantities of valuable cultural artifacts that the Armenian nation lost during the Genocide in addition to the 1.5 million human souls.



Final Quality Inspection at Printing Press

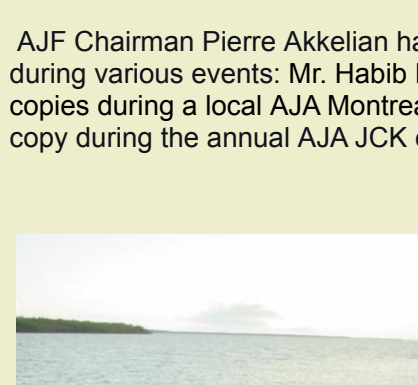


Copies of Catalogue Presently Distributed to AJF Patrons and Academic Institutions Worldwide

New Call For AJF Scholarships For Fall 2015

Due to the successful outcome of the previous two scholarship programs and continued high demand, AJF will award five new grants to students seeking qualification in Diamond Grading. Applicants must be enrolled in the full-time intensive certificate program offered by the Armenian Gemological Laboratory and Academy (AGLA), which begins September 14, 2015. The study curriculum covers all aspects of diamond studies. Graduates will become certified experts in diamond grading and have the opportunity to pursue a career in the jewellery sector. Applicants must show a strong allegiance to traditions, customs and legacies. A recommendation letter is required along with a signed application form and other documents. Interested candidates should secure admission in the AGLA program prior to applying to AJF. Completed applications must be received by August 20, 2015. Application forms and requirements are available online and may also be requested in writing through AJF. Priority will be given to deserving applicants from the following communities: Syriahay expatriates, provinces, Yerevan, Artsakh, and the Diaspora. Teaching and course materials are in the Armenian language. Therefore, proficiency in Armenian is a key requirement for all applicants. Applicants should preferably have a strong knowledge or background in physics.

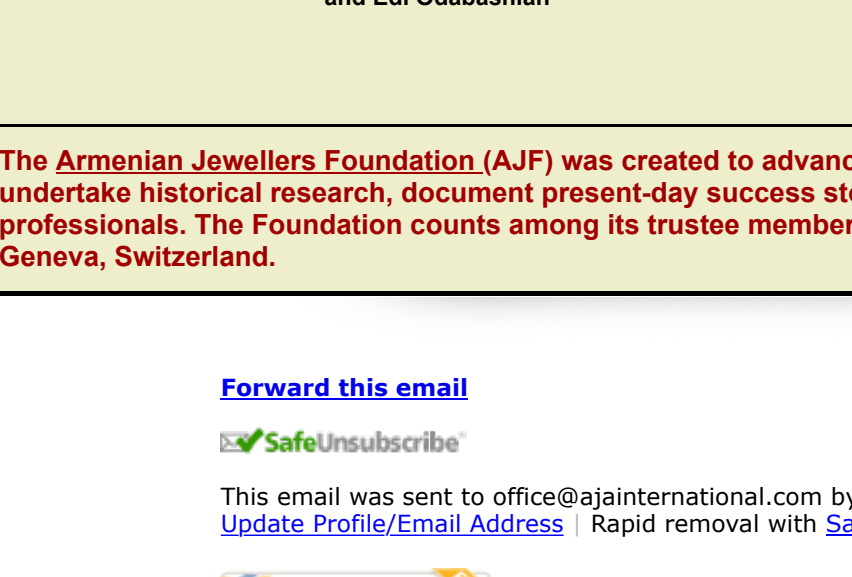
AJF's June 2015 Graduates



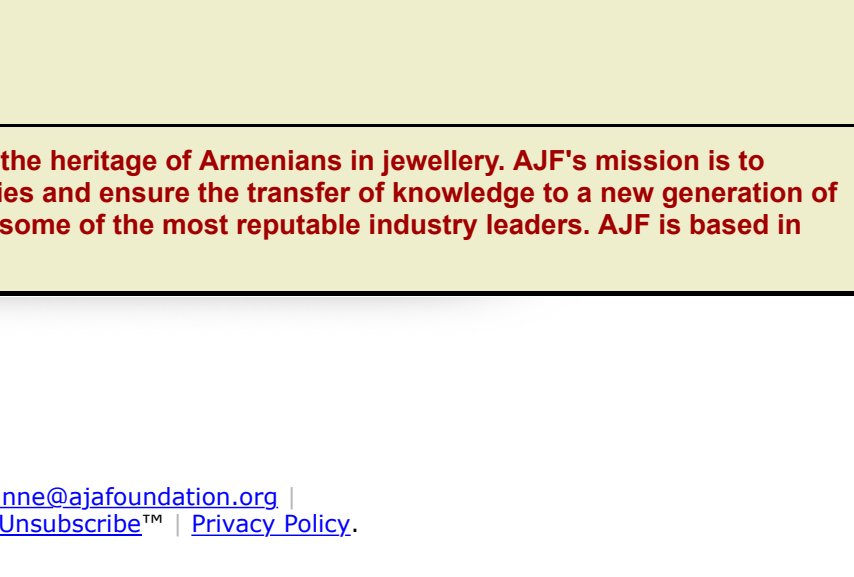
The latest round of AJF scholarships funded five students who all successfully graduated in June. Tatevik Sargsyan, one of the grantees from Artsakh, was awarded the highest grade and mention among all AGLA students, receiving a 94% Excellent grade. Syriahay Hagop Khaloyan graduated with 83% Very Good; Armenian Science Academy scholar Ara Musheghyan with 82% Very Good; Javakhkahay (Georgia) Hayk Khanyan with 74% Good; Tavush resident Haykaz Harutyunyan with 70% Good. The latter, son of an azatamark from a border village said, "We have learned a great deal in this program and now I am ready to invest my knowledge in the development of Armenian jewellery and diamond making."

To-date, AJF has enrolled 10 students who have graduated from the AGLA program successfully and obtained their certificate diplomas. The majority of the graduates have embarked on new careers in the jewellery sector. AJF is grateful to all its patrons who have contributed to its educational programs: the Canadian Jewellers Association, AJA of Italy, AJA of Canada (Ontario and Quebec), Jewelers Mutual Insurance, Invesa Insurance and Financial Services, Mr. Krikor Istanbuli, and Mr. Habib Malo.

For more information on the scholarship program, please contact info@ajf.foundation or info@gemology.am.



AJF's H.Kaspar, Program Director Hoghine Petrosyan with Syriahay and Javakhkahay Students on May 12



AGLA Graduating Class of June 2015

Grants for Syrian Armenian Expatriates in Canada

Thanks to support from the Birks Family Foundation, AJF is launching its new educational program in Canada to benefit the newly settled Syrian Armenian refugee community. Thousands of Armenians fleeing war and destruction in Syria have sought refuge in Armenia and elsewhere including many families who chose Canada as their new home. Canada is leading in resettlement of Syrian refugees in general, which has been evident during the past six months. Montreal has welcomed over 1000 Syrian refugees of Armenian origin, and with more on the way, the number is expected to surpass 2000 in 2015. The AJF program will fund training grants for over a dozen young students at the Ecole de Gemmologie de Montréal (EGM) and the Ecole de Joaillerie de Montréal (EJM), two of the prime jewellery academies in Canada. The initiative is fully managed by AJF with support from key community organizations in Montreal.

Patrons' News

AJF is proud to welcome **Margaret Ajemian Ahnert** to its Patrons Club. Ms. Ahnert is the author of *The Knock At The Door*, a memoir about the Armenian Genocide, which has received numerous awards including: *USA Book News "Best Book of 2007"*, *The Honorable "Musa Dagh Battle"* Medal (August 2008), and the *Ellis Island Medal of Honor* (May 7, 2011), among others.

AJF Chairman Pierre Akkelian had the pleasure to gift copies of the recently published *Treasures of Western Armenia* to several patrons during various events: Mr. Habib Malo and Invesa Insurance and Financial Services Representative Gerard Chadarevian received their copies during a local AJA Montreal gathering. Nihar Parikh, Executive Director at Shrenuj & Co. and CEO of Simon Golub & Sons received his copy during the annual AJA JCK event in Las Vegas.



Steven and Aimee Sarajian, Margaret Ajemian Ahnert, Pierre Akkelian and Edl Odabashian



AJF Chairman Pierre Akkelian with AJF Patron Nihar Parikh

The Armenian Jewellers Foundation (AJF) was created to advance the heritage of Armenians in jewellery. AJF's mission is to undertake historical research, document present-day success stories and ensure the transfer of knowledge to a new generation of professionals. The Foundation counts among its trustee members some of the most reputable industry leaders. AJF is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

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